Even Start Family Tracking Program Documentation

The Even Start Family Tracking program has been designed to gather and analyze data specific to the Even Start program and measure how well it is attaining it's performance objectives and goals. When all sites in Montana are using this program to record their family information, analysis of performance and site specific follow up will be greatly facilitated.

Program Installation

See the installation instructions at the end of this document.

Beginning the Program

First Time EvenStart Configuration

If you are starting the program for the first time, the first screen you will see is the Configuration screen. On this you need to select the name of your Even Start Site so that all data that you will enter will be properly coded for your site. Also if Montana SIMS data is accessible on your network, you should indicate the path where it can be found. You might need help with this from someone who knows how your network is set up.
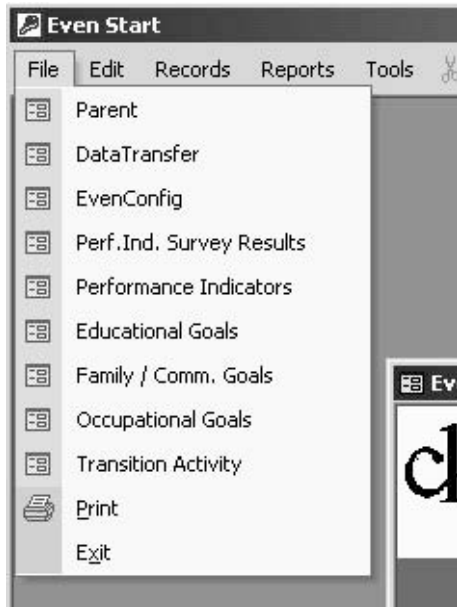
EvenStart Switchboard

Except for your first start up, the Even Start SwitchBoard is the first thing you'll see after starting the program. It has buttons that will direct you to the three most common tasks you'll be using: Entering Family Data, Running Performance Indicator Surveys, and Transferring Data. Before we discuss these tasks, let's look at the other main feature on the start up screen: the main menu.

Main Menu

Every feature of the program is accessible from the main menu. The main menu has five drop down submenus and a set of tool bar icons.

File

The File Menu provides access to all data stored and used by the Even Start program. Even Start Family Tracking data can be accessed by selecting Parent. (It can also be accessed by clicking the Family Tracking option on the main switchboard. Many tables that are used in the program can be viewed and edited through the file menu. From the file menu you can also access the Print command which will allow you to print any form or list you see on the screen. From this menu you can also export data for administrative compilation and reporting and import data from other Even Start sites.

Edit

The Edit Menu provides access to standard editing functions such as cutting, copying, and pasting text, undoing a cut or paste, and finding text.

Records

The Records Menu provides navigational functions when looking at records from a particular table. This allows you to move to the next record, a previous record, the first record or the last record. Commands are here that allow you to add a new record, and to delete a record. Here you can also select how you want to sort and filter records.

Reports

The Reports Menu provides access the Performance Indicator, the Even Start Census, and the Participant List.

Tools

The Tools Menu allows you to choose which fields will appear when displaying your parent list. It also provides a means for scanning data tables after an update to insure that all have the required fields.

Toolbar Icons

The tool bar icons to the right of the Tools submenu duplicate functions that are found on the Edit and Records submenus. There are icons for text Cut, Copy, Paste, Delete, and Undelete functions. Other icons are for finding specific information, sorting and filtering records, and for basic record navigation. Holding the mouse over one of these icons for a few seconds will bring up a brief description of the icon's function.

EvenStart Family Tracking

This is the primary form on the program and is the source of all data which will be tabulated for performance measurements. On the family tracking form you enter both Parent and Target Child information.

Parent Information

When you are on your first Parent Record or when you have used the Navigator Bar described below to add a blank record, you begin by entering the social security numbers (or other nine digit identifier) and the last name and the first name of the parent.

Montana SIMS Data

The Even Start Family Tracker can make use of Montana SIMS data if it is present on the same computer or on the local network to which the computer is connected. Some of the data that is entered for each family's parent is also entered in the Montana SIMS program. By establishing a connection to Montana SIMS data it is not necessary to reenter Literacy test scores, birth dates, and program starting and ending dates.

Navigator Bar

Every Data entry form has a Navigation Bar. The buttons on the Navigation bar duplicate functions that are available in the Records Submenu, and are also on the main menu tool bar. These buttons allow you to move from one record to another in a table. The left most button goes to the first record in the table. The left arrow button just to the right of it brings up the previous record. The right arrow button brings up the next record, and the right arrow – vertical line jumps to the last record. The right arrow – asterisk creates a new record. When there are subforms within a main form, as in the case of Target Child information, there may be two navigator bars on the screen at the same time. As described earlier, the lower navigator bar will position the Family record. However since there can be more than one target child per family, the navigator bar at the bottom of the target child subform can be used to select a specific target child within a family or add a new target child to the family's list.

Command Buttons

Mt.Sims Update

On a new family record, if your system is set up to look for Montana SIMS data, once you have entered the social security number, last name and first name of the parent, it looks to see if it can find a match in the Montana SIMS database. If it does, it will automatically fill in Literacy scores, birth date and program starting dates. At any other time you'd like to see if any new information has been entered into Montana SIMS, you can do a manual MT.SIMS update by pressing this command button. If information in MT.SIMS is different from information in the Even Start program, you will be prompted before Even Start information is replaced. The Even Start program does not write to, alter, or otherwise effect data that is stored in Montana SIMS.

List

When you have more than a few families entered and you need to find one of them, rather than using the navigation bar to display one at a time, it is often faster to find the one you need from a list. Pressing the List button will list families by the name of the parent. It will also display some other relevant information about the parent. When the list is displayed, you can change the way it is sorted by

clicking on the header of a particular field and then pressing the Sort Key. If you would like to change the Parent fields that are displayed when it is in list view, you can do so by pulling up the Change Display Form from the Tools Menu.

Delete

This button will delete information on a particular family. Unless this information is erroneous or duplicates information that was entered with a different spelling, you should not delete information of anyone who was enrolled in the program for any time period regardless of how small. Instead put in a date indicating when that parent exited the program.

Undo

This button can be used when you make editing changes to a Parent's information and wish to revert back to what was there prior to the changes. This undo button will only work if you have not moved to a different record after making the changes you wish to undo.

Exit

The Exit Button closes the Family Information Window and returns the user to the Swithboard.

Target Child

Several of the Even Start performance indicators are meant to measure progress that children in the family make. In each fiscal year one or more of the family's children can be tracked. A new target child record should be created for each year that the child is being tracked. If a child has been tracked in 2004, and you wish to track the same child in 2005, do not change the Fiscal Year on the 2004 record. Create a separate record for 2005.

For each child being tracked we need the age, fiscal year, and birth date and enrollment date. Also indicate whether the child has a disability and the disability type. The attendance rate should be the child's school attendance if the child goes to kindergarten or grade school. Otherwise fill in the child's attendance rate at Even Start sessions, which in this case would be the same as the parent's attendance rate. The types of progress that are measured depend on the age of the child being tracked.

Navigator Bar

A separate navigator bar is located at the bottom of the Target Child Subform. This is because a family can have more than one target child, and a new record is entered for a target child for each fiscal year in which he or she is enrolled in the program. This navigator bar facilitates moving between the different target children for one family. It will not move to a different parent record. That is what the navigator bar at the bottom of the parent form will do.

Age Groups

The age of the Target child will determine the information that is being tracked. Once the child's birthdate is entered and age group is confirmed, one of the three age group tabs will become active. That is the only one in which data should be entered.

Birth to 2 Years

For infants and toddlers it is only necessary to confirm whether there has been language gain and cognitive gain during the current fiscal year. No test measurements are required.

3 to 5 Years

Preschool children should have two child observation ratings during the program fiscal year. Each child observation rating needs to be dated, and scores need to be entered for the following three categories: Language Development, Literacy and Fine Motor Skills. This program was set up for ratings of 1 – 5 in these skills, however that could change in the near future. If you have questions about which scores to use in these Child Observation ratings, it would be best to contact the Even Start program coordinator.

Kindergarten to Grade 3

Somewhat more information needs to be entered for school age children. It is necessary to find out and enter the average attendance at the school the child is attending, and whether the child was promoted to the next grade at the end of the school year. Also two separate teacher ratings are required during the program fiscal year. Each teacher rating needs to be dated and scores need to be entered for the following six categories: the child's motivation to learn, the child's general academic performance, and the child's ratings in reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Again, this program was set up for ratings on a scale of 1 -5 with 5 being the highest. If you have questions about what scores or ratings to use, it would be best to contact the Even Start program coordinator.

Objectives and Goals

Four types of goals are tracked: School, Educational, Occupational, and Family / Community. There are various choices with the drop down box describing each of these goals. If an option you need is not available, the lists of Educational, Occupational, and Family / Community goals can be edited under the File Submenu of the Main Menu. When entering a goal, be sure to enter a target date for achieving the goal. If the goal is achieved it is important to enter the date that the goal was completed, since certain performance indicators look for that.

Transitions

One or more transitions can be recorded. Whenever a transition is recorded, it is important to indicate whether there is a follow up transition activity. Both the transitions and transition activities should be dated. The transition activity list can be accessed and modified in the Files Submenu.

Performance Indicator Results

Performance Indicators are used to measure the success of each Even Start Site and of the statewide program as a whole. The criteria used for measuring each performance indicator can be viewed under the Performance Indicator List which is accessible under the File Submenu. Each indicator has a code, a description, and a target or standard which describes how success will be measured.

Running a Performance Indicator Survey

Any Even Start Site can run its own Performance Indicator Survey at any time. The survey, which is started by pressing the Survey Data button, will go through all of the site's data and evaluate each family's record to see which Performance Indicators have been met and which have been missed. The Even Start Site prompts defaults to the user's site. An administrator who has gathered data from all sites, can run the survey for all sites by selected the Administrative Site. If you wish to reprint a report that was run on a previous date, simply press the down arrow to the right of the test date prompt, and select the previous date on which the survey was run.

Command Buttons

Update from MT.SIMS

If Montana SIMS data is on your system, and you want to check that all information for your families has the latest Montana SIMS data, press the button. A scan will be run, and you will be prompted before information is updated for each family, where Montana SIMS data is different. If you know all of your families have current data, there is no reason to press this button.

Survey Data

The Survey Data button actually starts running the Performance Indicator Survey. If you have already run the survey, simply select the date on which the survey was run, and print the results.

Print Results

After a survey is processed, you need to press the Print Results button. This will bring up a Print Preview window, from which you can view the results on screen or print them. A print preview tool bar may appear at the top of the screen. Here there are icons which you can use to magnify the report so it is easier to read, to navigate through the pages, and to print the report. If the tool bar does not appear, simply right click on the Preview Window, and the commands which you need will appear.

Viewing Performance Indicator Survey Results

Performance Indicator Survey Results are shown as a table. There is a row for each Performance Indicator. Each row shows the Performance Indicator Code, and describes the Type of Indicator as well as what the Target or Standard is. The fourth column shows the number of families who had the necessary data to qualify for evaluation regarding whether the target has been achieved. Not every family will have data that qualifies for

evaluation for a particular performance indicator. The fifth column shows the percentage of those qualified families that met the target. The sixth column shows the percentage of families that is the Even Start goal. The seventh column indicates whether the site met the percentage that is the goal. The last column shows any explanatory notes that have been entered to indicate why the site may or may not have met its goal.

There are two other ways to view performance indicator results. One is to go to each family's record listed under Even Start Family information and press the Performance Indicator Page Tab. Here you will see a list of all Performance Indicators on which the family was evaluated on. If several surveys have been run, you will see performance indicators for each survey. The check box in the Results indicator will indicate whether the family passed or failed the target. There is also a column for notes in which it is possible to enter some reasons regarding why the family passed or failed the target. If you wish to enter notes regarding the overall performance of the site on a specific performance indicator, then select Performance Indicator Results from the File Submenu. Here you will see the site's results for each performance indicator, and can enter any notes regarding the site's failure or success in meeting any indicator target.

Data Transfer

This form is used when data needs to be exported from an Even Start site to a centralized administrative site for state and region wide compilations. It is also used by the administrative site for importing data that has been sent.

Import/ Merge Data

When an administrative site needs to Import data from a field site, enter the name of the file containing the data into the Import File Name field. Even Start data export files are named ESEXP*nn*.MDB where nn stands for the site ID #. So a file from a location where the Even Start Site ID is 02 would be named ESEXP02.MDB. If you are not certain of the full path to the folder where the file you wish to import is stored, you can press the Browse Button to pull up a dialogue box from which you can search for it. Once you have identified the file name, to import the file, press the Import / Merge Data button.

Create Export File

A site can create an export file at any time, by pressing the Create Export File Button. You should write down the full path name of the export file. Then you can email it to your administrative site, by attaching it to an email.

Reports

Performance Indicator Results

This report is the grid listing each performance indicator and the percentage of the target that selected site or entire data set attained.

Even Start Census

This report lists each family, and on a grid plots out their time of enrollment in home and/or center based learning. The grid can be plotted to span either one or two year periods.

Participant List

This report is a print out of all participants in the program.

Common Tasks

Searching for Data

The little binocular icon can be used to help search for data. Let's say that you want to look for a parent whose first name is Manissa. Bring up the Family Tracking form, put your cursor in the first name field and then click on the binoculars. Type in the name Manissa, and then click search. If there is a parent with a first name of Manissa, the system will position the form on that record.

Sorting Lists

If you wish to sort the Parent List by a specific field such as the social security number, pull up the Family Tracking Form, click the List Button, then click on the column heading, in this case ParentSSNum, and push the A-Z button. To return to sorting by Last Name, click on the Last Name column heading, and then the A-Z button.

Filtering Data

If you have a large list of families, and you only want to look at one's which meet a specific criteria, you need to temporarily filter the data. To do this, pull up the family tracking form, then pull down the Records submenu from the main menu and select Filter by Form. A blank form will come up. Fill out the criteria you want to use for your filtering in the appropriate fields. You can use greater than (>) and less than (<) signs. For example to list only families where the parent was born after 1985, pull up the Family Tracking form, pull down the records submenu, then select filter by form. Type " > 12/31/1984 " into the birthdate field. Press the tab key, then again press the Records Menu. Look for a funnel icon which will apply the selected filter. If it doesn't appear at first, press the little arrow symbol at the bottom of the drop down menu. Press the funnel icon, and you will see that the navigator bar at the bottom of the icon says that the list is now filtered, and only a portion of the records are displayed. Later when you want to remove the filter, look for the remove filter icon. It shows an X over the funnel. Press it and the full list will be restored.

Printing Data

Other than the three reports listed above, you can print whatever is on the screen, by dropping down the File Submenu and selecting Print. Do this if you want to print information for a particular family. This also works for any lists you are viewing.

Customizing Parent List

When you press the List button that is at the bottom of the Family Tracking form, the Parent list displays. By default the fields shown in the list are the Parent's social security number, last name, first name, birthdate, and pre and post scores for both the TABE and BEST literacy tests. To change the fields that are displayed or their order, pull down the Tools Submenu, and select Change Display Fields. All the Parent fields that are available are shown in the list. A zero next to a particular field means it is not displayed. A number greater than zero designates the column that the field will appear in. You may change the column order or the fields that are displayed.

System Configuration and Maintenance

Even Start Configuration

The most important field in the configuration form is the Even Start Site ID. This needs to be set correctly, so that when data is combined for statewide review, data from all sites will be distinct. On this form you can also indicate where the program should look for Montana SIMS data, if it is accessible on the network.

Standard Code Lists

Lists that the system uses for encoding and categorizing information are accessible under the File Submenu. Most of the lists are self explanatory. Users should not need to make changes to these lists, however new records can be added if needed. All lists have a code and description. To add a new record, put in a unique alpha code, and then the description.

Performance Indicators

Performance Indicators should not be changed by users at Even Start sites. However if there are any questions about goals and how there attainment is being measured, information in this table may be helpful in clarifying concerns.

Educational Goals

Family / Community Goals

Occupational Goals

Transition Activities

Data Scan

Users may be asked to do a Data Scan after receiving an update. The Data Scan is accessible from the Tools submenu and table structures in the sites current data with those expected by the update, and makes changes as needed. You should not need to run a Data Scan unless you are specifically instructed to do so by tech support.

Even Start Family Tracking Program
Installation Instructions

1. This is an installation disk for a computer that already has Microsoft Access 2000 installed.

2. Put the CD in.

3. Press the Start Button on the left side of the tool bar. Then select Run.

4. Type in D:\SETUP.EXE or browse for it.

5. Accept all of the defaults that the setup program offers.

6. When it has finished, press the Start Button on the left side of the tool bar. Select Programs. Look for the EvenStart program. Click on it.

7. The first time the program starts up, it will ask for an Even Start Site ID. On the right of the field is an drop down box arrow. Press it and select your site from the list. Close the window when you are finished and you will go to the opening screen.

8. If you want to create a short cut for the desktop, so you don't always have to start it by pressing START, and then PROGRAMS, press START and then PROGRAMS, and right click on EvenStart. One of your choices in the menu will be to create a short cut. Select it and a short cut will appear on the desktop.

9. If you have Montana SIMS data on your computer or on your network, you need to go to the configuration window and indicate where the Montana SIMS data is stored.

10. If you run into problems or need additional help with locating Montana SIMS data or running the EvenStart program on a network, feel free to call or email Jerry Kogan at the phone number or email address listed above.